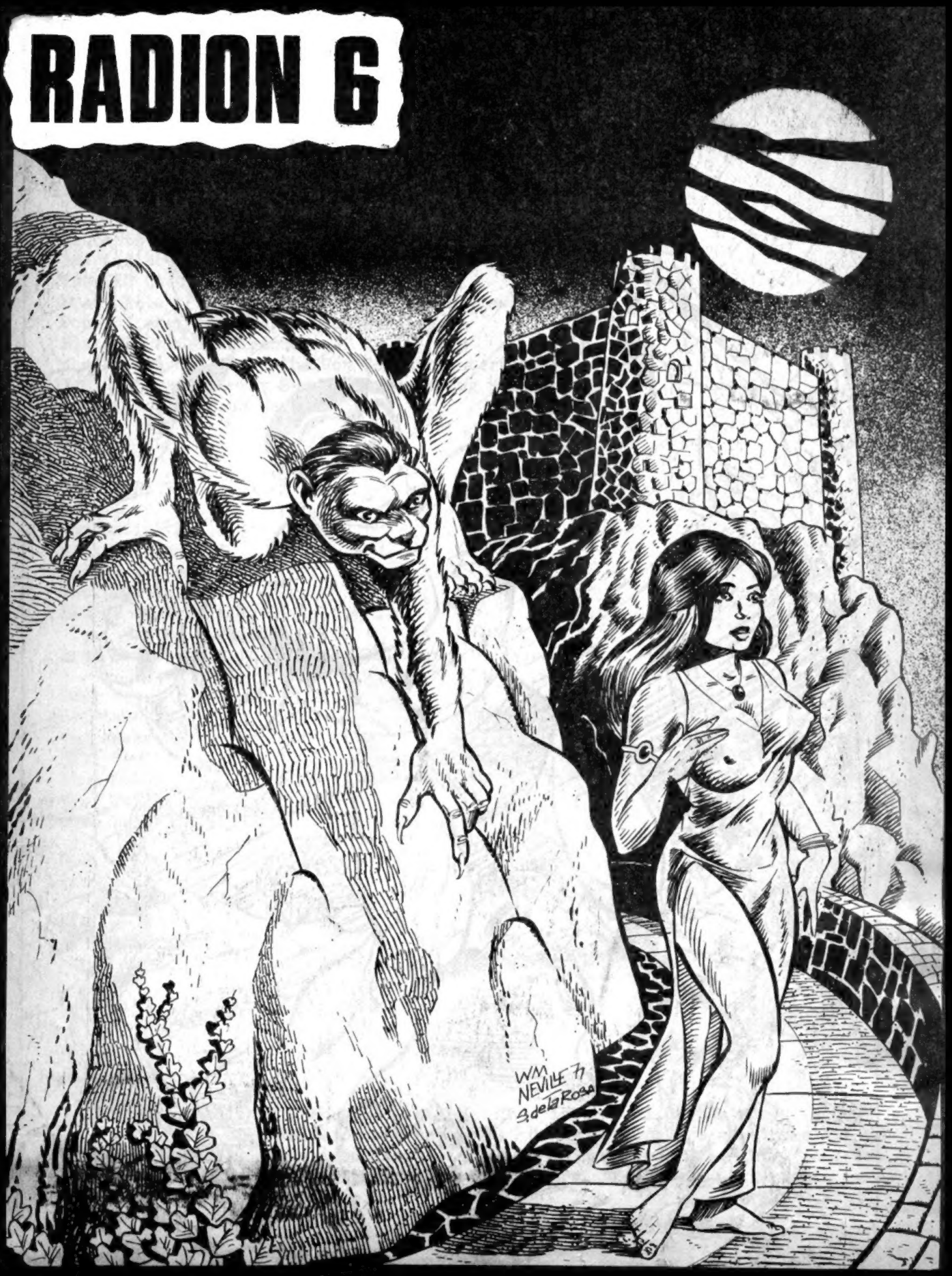
RADION 6
WM NEVILLE 77
S.delaRosa

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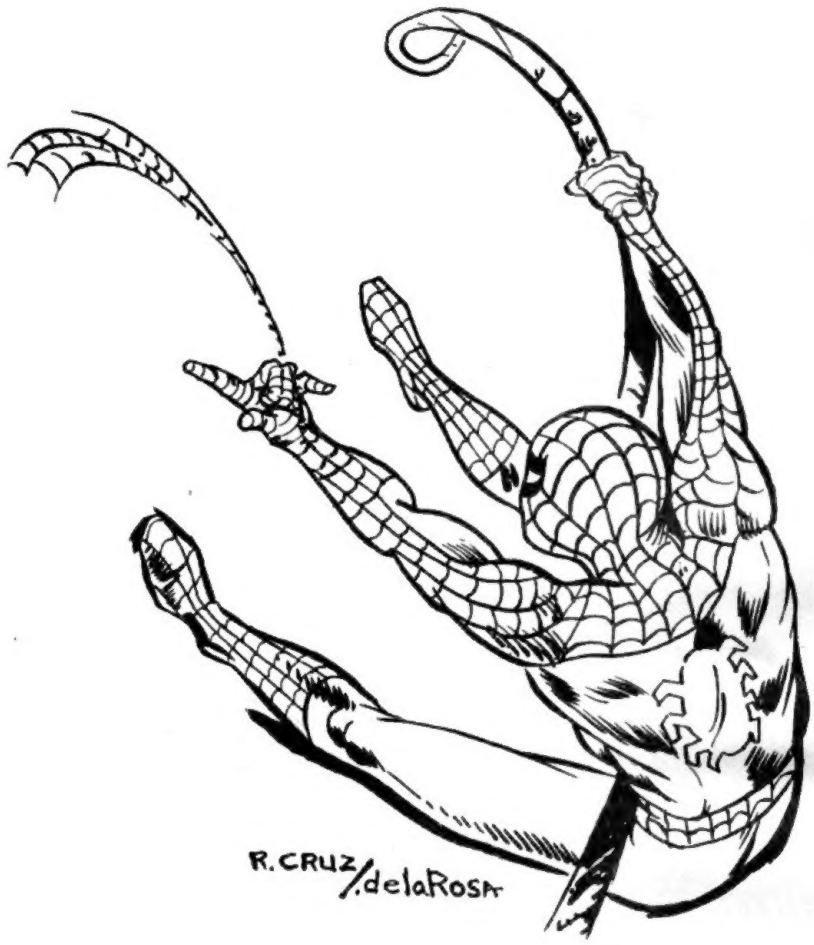

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SMART ALEC

by Bob Sparks

Tom Batiuk is the artist/writer of the internationally syndicated comic strip "Funky Winkerbean," which currently appears in over 200 newspapers in the United States and Canada. In addition to "Funky Winkerbean" he also does substitute teaching in Elyria, Ohio. Elyria is his adopted hometown and where he moved to from Akron in his youth. He has lived in Ohio all his life. Mr. Batiuk has a B.A. in art and a certificate in education from Kent State University. His substitute teaching should not be too surprising to anyone, since before "Funky Winkerbean" was syndicated he taught art for two and a half years.

Bob Sparks: What is it like working for a syndicate?

Tom Batiuk: Basically, I'm on my own. I'm working at home, I set my own hours, my own times, and my own schedules. My main obligation is to get the work back to the syndicate when it's due. For their part, they are involved with the promoting, selling, and mechanical production of the strip.

BS: Do they restrict you creatively in any way on the strip?

TB: I'm not restricted creatively in any way. I've been given a free hand to develop the strip the way I want to and to carry it in the directions I want to. This has really been great for me and it's really worked out fine as far as the strip is concerned.

BS: Do you feel you have to water down the strip to suit a mass market?

TB: I don't water the strip down or write down to anybody. In fact, I really don't write to a particular audience. I'm not writing either to young people or older people. If anything, I'm basically writing for someone like myself. I try to write somethin I would like to see in the paper as a reader of cartoon strips and furtunately, it has gone over well with people in general.

BS: How long was it before you saw "Funky" in print, after you conceived him?

TB: A little bit of background oh how long it took "Funky" to see print: I was teaching art in Elyria and I took a sketchbook to a local paper. I had been doing sketches of students in the school and adding little humorous captions to them. They suggested that I use this as a once a week teen strip that they would like to have in their paper--it was a panel cartoon. So I did this panel cartoon for about a year and I got a good response to it. When I took it to a syndicate, they liked it and suggested that I work it into a complete comic strip. So at that time, I added the characters of Funky and Les and other major characters in the strip. For them, I drew upon friends that I had known in college and school, associates that I had worked with, and also some students that I had; and in various ways, combined features and personalities to create the basic set of characters in the strip. From that point, it took a little less than a year to finally see the strip published in the paper.

ES: How did you ever come up with a name like "Funky Winkertean"?

TB: When the strip was first going out, I wanted to call it "Winkertean and Company" since I knew there would be quite a stock of characters to go along with Funky. The syndicate wanted to simply call the strip "Funky" and at the time I really didn't care that much for the name "Funky". The syndicate was not really too fond of calling it "Winkerbean and Company" and in a brilliant stroke of compromise, we got together and called it "Funky Winkerbean". One editor commented at one time that it was either the worst name or the best name in the history of comics and he wasn't quite sure which.

ES: Do you draw the panels or write the captions first?

TB: I usually have the idea written out first and then I block it out in cartoon form and fill it in with the drawing.

ES: How far in advance of publication do you work?

TB: I'm six weeks ahead on the dailies, which is probably a little close but I like it that way because it allows me to kind of keep things fresh and stay on top of things. And if I want to insert a series or idea that is topical, I can get it in without it becoming dated rather quickly. The Sundays, on the other hand, are about 14 weeks ahead which is a pretty good lead time, but they need that at the printers, so that they can get the colors made and out to the papers in time.

ES: Do you ever use outside gags?

TB: I don't use any kind of outside gags for "Funky". I sort of have a specialized writing style, I guess, and I basically have enough material for myself--and I prefer to use just my own ideas.

ES: How did you manage to acquire your low-keyed, tongue-in-cheek sense of humor?

TB: When I was teaching at school, I would always be jiking around and doing little things with with kids and just jotting down goofy ideas in the sketchbook. Then in college, of course, you are always joking around with your friends and having a good time. Basically, what I'm doing now is doing it in a comic strip and getting paid for it, and I approach it the same way.

FUNKY WINKERBEAN

By Tom Batiuk

WOW!
I COULD GO FOR A DATE WITH ANY ONE OF THAT OTHER SCHOOL'S MAJORETTES!
BATIUK
10-26
I'D SETTLE FOR A DATE WITH ONE OF THEIR MINORETTES!

BS: Which comic strips do you like?

TB: It's kind of hard to say, because I know that if I start listing a bunch of them, I'm going to forget a lot of my favorites. Of course, I like "Peanuts", which is probably the granddaddy of all the comic strips right now and one of the best ones. I like "B.C.", "Wizard of Id", and I like the new strip out by Brant Parker, "Crock", which I think is a really good strip. I also like "Animal Crackers", which I think is a very good strip. "Tumbleweeds" is a fine strip and "Conchy" by James Childress is good too. I also enjoy "Mr. Tweedy" by Ned Riddle. Basically, I think that gives you an idea of the type of strips I like. There are a lot more but right offhand I'm really hard-pressed to come up with most of them.

BS: How did the paperback, "Play It Again, Funky" come about?

TB: Basically, Tempo Books, which is part of Grosset and Dunlap, liked the strip quite a bit and was very interested in bringing out a paperback of the comic. Of course, I was very excited to have a collection made of the work and to have it out on the stands.

BS: Will you ever give up "Funky" like Milt Caniff did with "Terry and the Pirates" and do another strip?

TB: Right now in the strip, there are so many ideas and new directions that I would like to go into or try out that I am completely wrapped up with it. I'm really excited about the things going on in "Funky" and I really don't feel like tackling another project at the moment. I guess that ties in with your question about having someone else do "Funky" if I left. I see a great many possibilities yet to explore and I don't know the amount of time it will take but I'm interested in exploring and following all of them. It seems that every time I get into one area, a new area, and start working on some of those ideas, several more new areas kind of branch off it and open up so I'm usually ending up with more things to do and carry out as I go along. Being as interested as I am in "Funky", I haven't given a though to a question like that and there is really no way to answer a question like that at this time.

BS: Will Funky and his pals ever grow up?

TB: I really haven't decided that question yet. In the beginning of the strip, all I knew was that I wanted to avoid some of the trite and clichéd ways of solving this problem. One of the things that I find happening with Les and the rest of the characters is that they are dealing with universal problems and situations, so there is a kind of timelessness to this type of thing. They are really not geared to a specific age; the problem of getting into a fight after school, or asking a girl for a date, are problems that really haven't changed all that much over the years. It's one of those deals where the more things change, the more they stay the same. So in a sense the characters become kind of timeless examples of human beings and whether you are young and looking at them or older and looking back, people still kind of recall the same kind of

FUNKY WINKERBEAN
Tom Batiuk
FAMILY LIVING COURSE- YOU FIND ANOTHER STUDENT IS PICKING ON YOU! SHOULD YOU...
(A.) SEE YOUR GUIDANCE COUNSELOR ABOUT IT
BATTIUK
(B.) DISCUSS IT WITH YOUR PARENTS
(C) GIVE HIM YOUR LUNCH MONEY EVERY DAY LIKE HE ASKS!

feeling and can identify with the characters in that way. As to how they will change and what will be happening; I think that is still growing and I'm kind of discovering along with the readers what is going to be happening in this area. One of the interesting phenomenons with the characters is that I find that they are becoming a lot warmer to me as the characters develop. I liked them when they first came out but as I work with them more and more, they become like real people with real personalities and I've become more familiar with them and I think the characters become a lot more likeable and identifiable as they have gone along.

BS: Do you get a lot of feedback on the strip?

TB: Yeah, I get a lot of mail and it is really kind of nice. First of all, it is nice to get a letter from someone saying that they enjoy a strip; that really knocks me out. It is also enjoyable to get a request for an original. I guess I'm still new enough that this really means a lot to me, and I'm flattered that someone would like to have a strip of mine for their very own. It's also nice to gauge the reactions of people to various characters as they appear in the strip. Les, of course, gets a lot of mail and I think it's because he's sort of a universal character and deals with universal problems like being afraid of climbing the rope in gym class.

Things like that have been around for a long time and will probably always be around in one form or another and I think that the reader can empathize and identify with it. It's also nice to get reaction to the various characters and see what people like. Crazy Harry got a lot of early mail. I think he got the majority of the mail for awhile but he has since been eclipsed by a character that has kind of surprised me and that is the band director. I thought he might appeal to a few people--I liked him quite a bit--but I didn't know how many people would be able to identify with the problems and things he goes through. Right now, most of the mail I get is on the band director. He seems to have gone over very well, and it ranges from housewives to college students to band directors themselves. I get a lot of mail from them and this is nice and also interesting to see what people enjoy.

BS: How do you feel about the legitimacy of the comic strip as an art form?

TB: There is no doubt that the comic strip is an art form, but it really isn't that important. I think the comic strip is probably one of the most popular art forms in the country today and it's probably better off than some of the more highly respected art forms, that are locked up in museums and that very few people have access to.

BS: Do you think there is a place left for the adventure strip, since most of the strips now are humor oriented?

TB: I certainly do. I believe there is plenty of room for well written and well drawn adventure strips. I think that very soon there will be a renaissance as far as adventure strips are concerned because I feel there is a lot of room for growth there.

FUNKY WINKERBEAN **Tom Batiuk**

SAYINGS FROM THE
I CHING
ANCIENT BOOK OF CHINESE PHILOSOPHY
THE MASTER SAYS: IT IS MORE JOYOUS TO GIVE THAN TO RECEIVE!
BATIUK
12-20
SO ASK FOR A GIFT AND MAKE SOMEONE HAPPY!

BS: What is your reaction to papers reducing the size of the strips they carry as well as completely dropping the funnies, forgetting, of course, that the funnies were started as a gimmick to sell newspapers?

TB: I think the newspapers are kind of killing themselves in this respect. Because basically, the comics are there to attract readers and they are

making it difficult for the reader to enjoy the comic strip and the space they save is rather negligible. I think the standard size at which the strips have been appearing throughout the years is still going to be the norm for quite awhile. They will be moving away from the size reduction in time; once they really get an idea of reader reaction to it. As a reader myself, they are making it a little difficult to see and read and they just aren't as enjoyable as when they are in their normal size.

ES: What do you think are the biggest problems facing the cartoonist today?

TB: The fact that a lot more of the strips could deal with reality and the real world. A lot of the cartoons I read today kind of remind me of television back in the 1950s, when you had a lot of situation comedies like "Our Miss Brooks" and "I Married Joan" which didn't really deal with life. They were just more or less little plays off in their own imaginary world. I think there are a lot of cartoons, especially humorous strips which are now dealing with life in the real world. I think they are a lot more fun and interesting to look at and I think the same thing will probably be happening to the story adventure strips. I think there is a need there to relate it to what is really going on in other than superficial ways, so I think that is probably the area where you are going to see the biggest breakthrough. That and the fact that I think there will probably be a good increase in the story strips that will be appearing in the future.

ES: What is your working time like?

TB: 90% of my working time is spent on drawing the strip. Once I have my ideas worked up, it takes quite a while for me to get the finished and completed drawing. I pencil slowly and every line that is there in the finished drawing is there in the pencils. I do all my own work--inking, lettering, and penciling--which I prefer. So it usually takes 8 hours to do a cartoon from start to finish.

ES: Please explain how you go about producing a "Funky" strip?

TB: A bit of rundown on my daily schedule: I work 6 days a week and about 8 hours a day, and generally 3 or 4 evenings a week. The strip is part work and part hobby; so it's hard to decide where I'm working on my hobby and where I'm actually going to work. Worked in among all that is the fact that I'm doing substitute teaching at a local school from time to time. When I'm not substituting, I'm out with my sketchbook, either in the school or out in the

FUNKY WINKERBEAN **Tom Batiuk**

WE HAVE A REALLY GREAT SHOW FOR YOU TONIGHT! OUR GUESTS INCLUDE A MAN WHO CLAIMS TO HAVE KNOWLEDGE OF C.I.A. INVOLVEMENT BEHIND THE RETIREMENT OF SMOKEY THE BEAR...
A SWEDISH PSYCHIC WHO CAN ACTUALLY MELT M&Ms IN HIS HAND...
BATIUK
AND DR. ERIC VON DOUGHNUT, WHO CLAIMS THAT EXTRA-TERRESTRIAL BEINGS VISITED THE EARTH YEARS AGO AND BUILT THE OHIO TURNPIKE!

community, sketching backgrounds of people--basically trying to improve my drawing style but occasionally I get things that I can incorporate into the strip. When I'm working in the studio, most of my time is, as I've said before, spent on the drawing itself. Usually I have a bunch of ideas written up ready to be drawn up, and I'll spend most of my time drawing it at one sitting. Then at another time, I'll spend my time inking. And later I'll catch on with most of the lettering. The same thing goes on with most of the Sundays. I kind of break it down to the various job parts and do several strips at once and try to work it along on kind of a production line process.

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UFO QUALITY FANZINES

The UNITED FANZINE ORGANIZATION, the UFO, is a co-op of fanzine editors who have gotten together to mutually aid each other in the production and advertisement of their zines and to promote higher quality. The members trade zines with each other and receive free advertising via the UFO CHECKLIST, which appears in each member zine. The UFO polices its own ranks, and should a member zine fall below the level of quality each member is required to maintain, it is quickly expelled. Faneds considering joining the group should contact either Jay Zilber or Steve Keeter. (Election results aren't in as of this writing and the chairmanship is still up in the air).

* * *

BATMANIA #23 -- Batmania is the fanzine for Batman fans and is one of the oldest comics fanzines still being published. Today the editor is Richard Morrissey. This issue, Rich's sixth, features "Gardner Fox Adventures" an indepth interview with "one of the earliest, most prolific, and greatest writers ever" conducted over a year of letters and phone conversations. Jay Zilber's "Update" makes its last appearance as Jay analyzes the limited collector's edition of "Batman vs. Ra's al Ghul." Michael Fleisher's "Encyclopedia of Comic Book Heroes" is reviewed. Vol. 1 (Batman) by Tom Fagan and Vol. 2 (Wonder Woman) by Alan Turiansky. Martin Lock looks at Batman's career in "The Brave and the Bold," Samuel Maronie writes about Caesar Romero's role of The Joker in the Batman TV series, and John Hemmings writes on Two Face. "Comic Oddities and Bat

Facts," the lettercol "The Batmanians Speak," and the results of the Batmania Ballot '75 round out the issue, along with a "World's Finest" index to Batman solo stories by Raymond Miller. The cover is by Al Bradford and interior illoes include the work of Alan Hutchison, Tim Lynch, Arlen Schumer, Cara Sherman, Wes Smith, and Mercy Van Vlack. 28 pages, offset, reduced type, 8½x11, wraparound. $1.00 from Richard Morrissey.

CLYDE'S COMICS AND TAILS #2 -- This issue of Clyde's is art-oriented, featuring "Yes, We Have No Bananas," a funny animal strip by Kevin Funk and Matt Feazell's "Lenny the Weasel," plus an interview with Tim Corrigan, who talks about his Superhero Comics; its founding and the trials and tribulations of keeping it going as well as his future artistic plans. Other artwork is by Dick Kulpa, Fred (Mandrake) Fredericks, Sal Buscema, and Bob Vojtko. The cover is by Paul Bianca. This issue is 32 8½x5½ pages, all offset for 50¢ from Terrence McCoy.

ENDEAVOR #12 -- Endeavor is a fannish zine featuring stories, strips, and illoes by a talented bunch of fans. This issue, however, is a special "surprise" issue (because Kurt never told anybody when it'd be out) that features only one story, a 46-chapter saga entitled "A Packrat on Noah's Ark, written by editor Erichsen. It's described as a tongue-in-cheek look at nostalgia, the American Dream, and a man whose highest ambition in life is to own a junkyard. Paul Chadwick did the illustrations (one for each chapter with the exception of chapter 45 which was done by Erichsen). The cover is by Erichsen, the back cover by Lee Jackson, and the inside back cover has Spider-Man discussing some of the problems you don't read about in the comics. 54 pages, mimeo with offset covers. 8½x11, 75¢ from Kurt Erichsen.

ENTROPY COSMIX #2 -- This is Bill Mutschler's strip-zine with three strips making up the bulk of this issue. The first is "Ellery Jack," a whodunit by Bill Neville which parodies none other than Ellery Queen. The second is a western strip called "The Horns of Sand" by Steve Clement, Bill Neville, Sam de la Rosa, and R. Burchette. The last strip is a superhero one by Samuel Maronie, Neville, and Burchette entitled "Helios, Inc." An editorial, lettercol, and a short story by Frank Watson called "The Yellow Flower" fill out the issue. Covers are by Dave Mowry, Neville/de la Rosa, and John Byrne/Alan Limacher. Other artwork in this issue is by Tim Herzog, Ed Margulies, Rick McCollum, Ken Meyer, Jr., Bill Mutschler, among others. Offset, 8½x5½, 40 pages with a 4-page Bugproof Mailing Cover. 75¢ from Bill Mutschler.

FANDOM FUNNIES #3 -- The Buyer's God: Fandom Funnies is a parody zine which each issue parodies some other well-known comics publication. The Buyer's God parodies a typical issue of The Buyer's Guide, with its regular features: "Lead Balloons," by Don and Maggie (Sherman, Zilber, and Caldwell), "So What?" by Murray Blastoff (Harry C. Broertjes), in which Murray tells of calling Marvel to get news items for his column (Marvel is buying out NatLamp; Marvel is starting a Kojak comic which will have a Howard the Duck cross-over...). Plus, there's a cartoon contest, won by little Janie Hamilton of Scottsdale, Arizona; honorable mention went to Vaughn Bode and Wallace Wood. And there are advertisements which have to be seen to be believed! The artwork includes covers by Alan Hutchison, Ron Harris, and Kurt Erichsen as work by Bill Sherman, Rich Bruning, Jim McPherson, Al Williamson (swiped by Martin Grime), Ken Barr (swiped by Martin Grime), and Frank Robbins (swiped by Martin Grime). The

Buyer's God is easily the funniest zine of the year--a must if you like to laugh! Tabloid, 11x17, offset, 28 pages on newsprint for $1.00 from Jay Zilber.

MANTRA #3 -- Delayed for two years by One Thing After Another, the third issue of Steve Keeter's fiction and strip zine is out. The main features are "Man-tonn the Fierce!," a strip by Keeter, illustrated by Bob Mosher; Dave McDonnell's "The Skull and I," the memoirs of Wolfgang E. Schmidlapp, the Red Skull's #1 henchman; and "The Beacon Meets Howard Ripoffsky," a strip by Keeter, illustrated by the now-gafiated Steve Shipley. Other features include "Speculum: Starborn," a commentary on Whipping Star by Frank Herbert, Rogue Star by Frederick Pohl and Jack Williamson, remarking on the concept of stars as living beings and doubling as a fannish chemistry lesson. And finally, there's "The Red Button," by Kurt Erichsen, letters, and an editorial. The covers are by Brent Anderson and Bob Mosher, and additional illoes by Wayne MacDonald, Larry Blake, Rod Snyder, and Lee Jackson. 38 pages, offset and ditto, 8½x11, 50¢ from Steve Keeter.

OZARK FANDOM 9/10 -- This is a special double issue, presenting cartoons and strips instead of OZ's usual letters and articles format. This issue features MOOSIE, Bob Vojtko's answer to Lassie, "Nature Girl" by Ronn Foss, and "From Beyond," a comic strip adaptation of H.P. Lovecraft's story illustrated by Mike Vosburg. On the text side is "The Comic Book Industry Seen as a Helix of Semi-Precious Stars," by David B. Kirby, which takes on the topic of inter-company imitation and the flow of ideas from publisher to publisher with artists and writers. In all, 20 offset, 8½x11 pages for $1.25 ($1.00 to OZ subbers) from Chris Rock.

OZARK FANDOM #11 -- This issue picks up where OZ 8 left off, present LOC's, discussion of comics, news, and a review of the new KING KONG, speculating of K.K.'s sexual abilities. Included with this issue is ZERO #1, a personalzine along the lines of IT COMES IN THE MAIL. In all, 10 8½x14 pages, mimeo, for 25¢ or two 13¢ stamps from Chris Rock.

RADION #5 -- Formerely THE DC READER, RADION features an interview and an in-depth article this issue. The interview is with Byron Preiss, the editor of FICTION ILLUSTRATED and WEIRD HEROES, and the author of "One Year Affair" from National Lampoon. But the main feature is Richard Morrissey's "Scripto Boy Wonder" which is a detailed look at the Legion of Super-Heroes and the exploits of one of the strip's prime writers, Jim Shooter, from his first story to the present. As for artwork, the covers are by Doug Hazlewood, Jesse Flores, Wallace Wood/Hazlewood, and Doug Herring. Filloes include the work of Pat Boyette, Paul Chadwick, Ric Cruz, Gene Day, Arvell Jones, Lee Jackson, Carl Taylor, Al Williamson, and Doug Hazlewood. The zine is 30 offset pages, 8½x11. 75¢ from Tom Mason

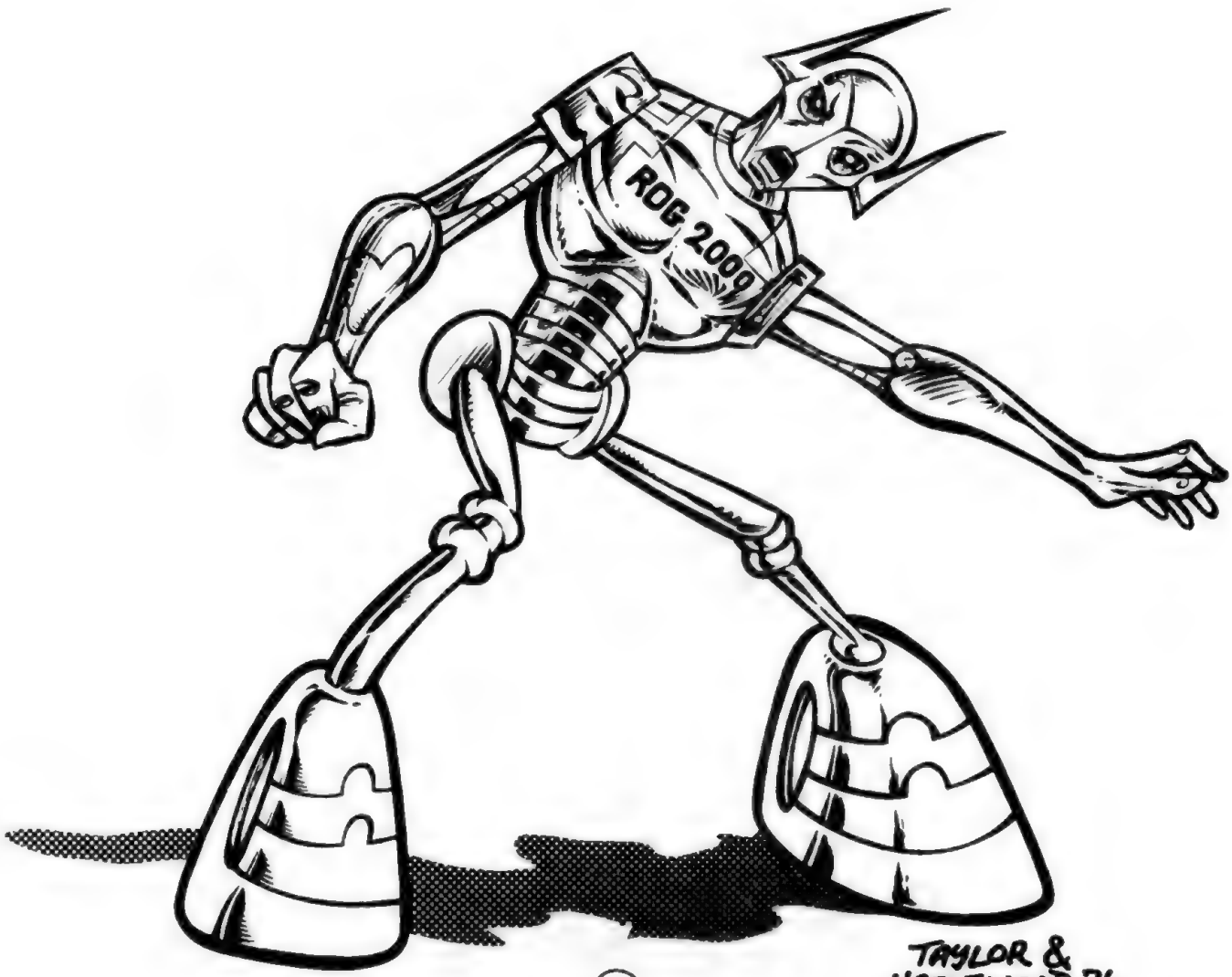
TETRAGRAMMATON FRAGMENTS! -- TF is the UFO Newsletter, the official organ of the United Fanzine Organization. This zine was founded in 1972 by Carl Gafford, and continues today in its third volume, under Kurt Erichsen. TF publishes monthly and on time, featuring the official business of the UFO (like the Congressional Record, only a lot more fun) and reviews of current UFO zines by the members of the group, plus natter, personal talk, occasional feuds, and other fan things going on between members. Ditto, 15-30 pages usually; 50¢ or 4/$1.35 from Kurt Erichsen. Issues available: 8,15,16, 23-25,27-37.

STILL AVAILABLE:

Batmania #19,20 $1 each from Rich Morrissey
Clyde's Comics and Tails #1, 30¢ from Terrence McCoy
Endeavor # 7,8,9,10,11: $1.50, 50¢, $1.00, $1.40, $1.00, respectively from Kurt Erichsen
Entropy Cosmix #1 from Bill Mutschler 40¢
Graphex #2,3 80¢ each from Bill Mutschler
Ozark Fandom #3,5,7,8 25¢ or 2-13¢ stamps each from Chris Rock
Radion 4 75¢ from Tom Mason

WHERE TO SEND CLANKY BITS OF LOOSE CHANGE

KURT ERICHSEN / 1580 W Myrtle Ave. / Coos Bay, Ore. 97420
STEVE KEETER / Rt. 2, Cape Colony / Edenton, NC 27932
TOM MASON / 705 Draper Road / Blacksburg, VA 24060
TERRENCE McCOY / 1424-8th St. / Rockford, IL 61104
RICHARD H. MORRISSEY / 55 Claudette Circle / Framingham, Mass. 01701
BILL MUTSCHLER / 500 Crestview Road / Wayne, Pa. 19087
CHRIS ROCK / Rt. 2, Box 265 / Mountain Grove, Mo. 65711
JAY ZILBER / 81 Webster Park / Columbus, Ohio 43214



FREE WHEELAN

Michael Wheelan is a member of a group of artists that, with the exception of Frank Frazetta and possibly Jack Gaughan, is largely ignored by fandom. These are the paperback cover artists. Michael Wheelan's work appeared just a few years ago and has since graced the work of Michael Moorcock, Fritz Lieber, Ron Goulart, and Tanith Lee, to name just a few.

Tom Mason: First of all, how about some background information on yourself?

Michael Wheelan: I was born on 6/29/50 in Culver City, California. My family moved at an average of about once every 1 1/3 years, so at various times I found myself growing up in San Diego, Saratoga, El Centro, Santa Maria, San Jose, Van Nuys--in short, "You-Name-It" California. From 1965 to 1967 I lived in Littleton, Colorado.

I've always had a strong interest in science, fantasy, sf, and related subjects. From as early as I can remember I was making up my own stories and illustrating them, or going to horror or sf movies and later trying to draw my favorite scenes from them.

TM: Did you have any formal art training and if so, where?

MW: My first taste of any formal art education was a brief spell when I was 15 at the Rocky Mountain School of Art, in Denver. But by far the most significant instruction I ever received was at San Jose State University in California. In particular, two art professors there--a Dr. Brose and Mr. Stewart--were great influences who did much to advance my ability to express myself artistically. I graduated from the university with a B.A. in art (President's Scholar).

I later went to the "Art Center College of Design" in L.A., where I learned a lot technically, but I dropped out after 9 months to pursue my career as an illustrator.

TM: What was the first cover you ever did and how did you get the assignment? How many covers have you done since then?

MW: Late in 1974 I took a friend's advice and sent some pieces I had around to the Discon art show. I was surprised to find out later that nearly all of my pieces sold and that one of my paintings got a "First Place-Fantasy Art" Award!

Encouraged by this development, I sent DAW 12 slides of my work, hoping to get a cover assignment. He replied favorably, so I packed up and moved out to the East Coast. As soon as I could, I contacted DAW again; he gave me my first paperback cover job: THE ENCHANTRESS OF WORLD'S END, by Lin Carter.

I still work for DAW, but I've since gone to other companies for work including Ace, Ballantine, and others. Between them all, I'd estimate I've done about 50 covers.

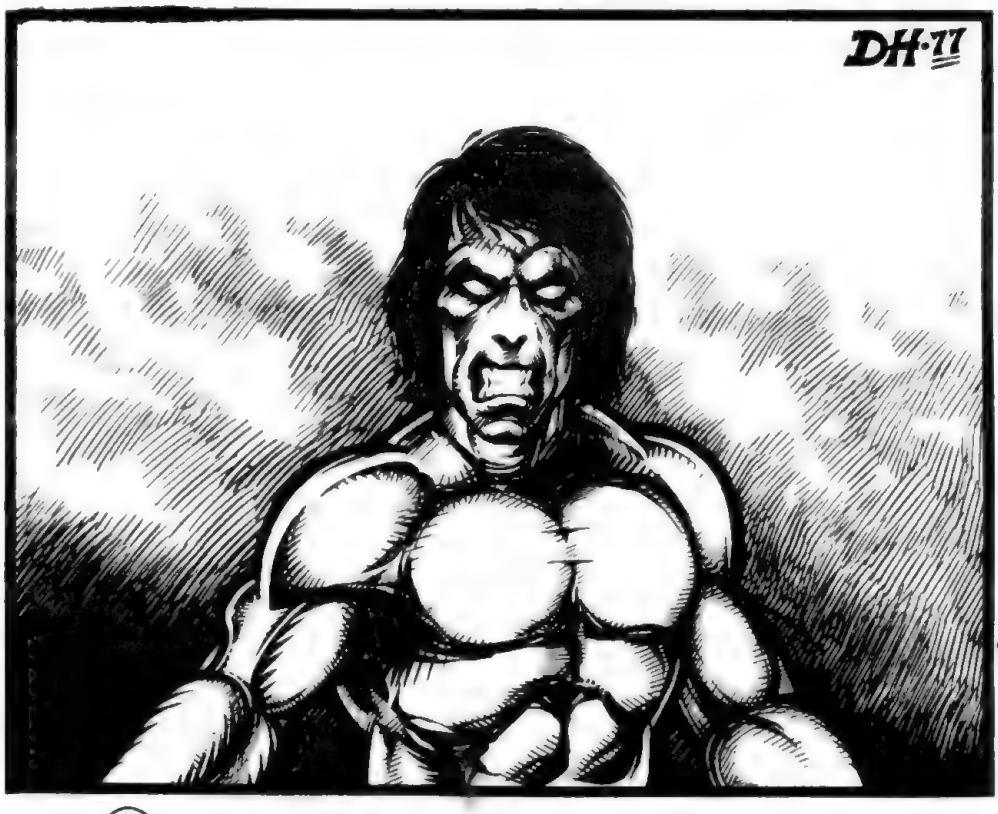
TM: What is the basic rate of payment for paperback covers and what size are your originals?

MW: To my knowledge, there is no "basic rate" of payment for cover art. Most publishers I'm familiar with pay between $300 and $1200 for cover art rights, depending on a number of factors (one's position in sf fandom not being one of them). I'm fortunate to be able to say that I receive many more offers for work than I can take. As a result, all I need do is inform someone who would like to use my work what others in the field are paying me. Usually, if the publisher wants my work badly enough, he/she will offer me more and I'll accept the offer. This is not to say that I don't take on jobs purely because they're fun or a challenge to do--it's my love for sf and fantasy that drew me into this field in the first place, not the financial opportunities.

To answer the second half of your question: I usually do my originals at 20"x30" or smaller. They're easier to carry that way!

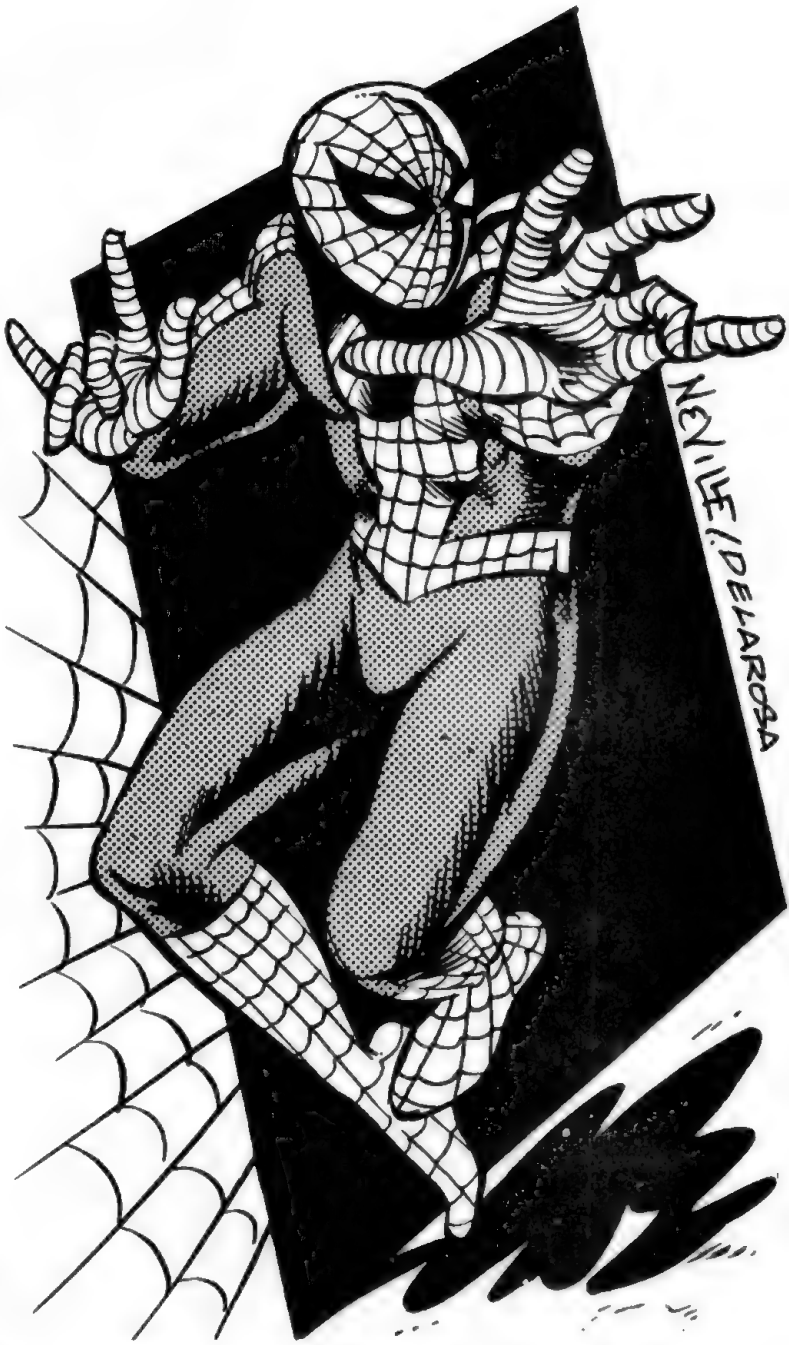
TM: How long does it take you to do a painting? Do you prefer working with oils, watercolors, or what?

MW: Norman Rockwell said of his POST covers "some come easy, some come hard." That's me all over. My work is rather unpredictable in this regard and it causes me a lot of worry and aggravation. I finish some paintings in 3 days while others have taken me 3 weeks to do (usually because of illness).



On the average I guess I am a relatively slow illustrator; it takes me about 10 working days from reading the ms. to the final brushstroke.

I love to work in any and all of the major painting media: oils, watercolors, gouache, and acrylics all have qualities that I enjoy. Though many illustrators--especially paperback cover artists--stick to one technique, I would rather have a variety at my disposal. Presently, however, I am using acrylics more than others. Acrylics seem to give me the greatest flexibility in approach of all the media and I especially appreciate the brilliancy and rapid drying time of the colors.



TM: Roughly, how much time passes from when you turn in a painting to when you finally see it on the newsstand?

MW: Most of my cover art takes 6 to 9 months to hit the stands.

TM: Could you describe the steps that go on from the time you get the manuscript until the time you turn in the finished painting?

MW: It seems to me that I approach each job in a different manner, but I'll try to give you some idea of how I work.

I usually read the manuscript twice--first for the "feel" of the book, the plot, and the primary themes, if any. The second time around I dig for details, especially in scenes I consider likely possibilities.

Then comes the hardest part: attempting to distill my feelings about the book into 3 or 4 pencil layouts. I or an art director will select one of these for the cover. Then I render the layout as a "comp"--a small (about 6"x9") acrylic rendering to serve as a guide for the final painting. As soon as I am satisfied with the comp I execute the final cover art. Sounds pretty straightforward, doesn't it? It isn't quite as simple as it sounds, though. Some publishers want full color comps to choose from; I've done as many as eight comps a job for some publishers. Some books take days for me to work out ideas for. Some paperbacks have perfect cover illoes on them already; what does an artist do when they ask him to do the cover for a reissue of such a book? I could go on.

TM: There seems to be a number of paperback artists whose work resembles Frank Frazetta (Boris Vallejo comes immediately to mind). How do you feel about artists who imitate Frazetta and is there really pressure from the publishers to imitate him?

MW: I don't mind young artists who imitate Frazetta (or anyone else, for that matter). Every artist has his or her influences; Frazetta himself had a distinct Hal Foster or Milt Caniff look to some of his very early work. But it does bother me to find capable artists of some professional experience attempting to imitate another artist's style for financial reasons, paucity of imagination or whatever.

You mention Boris Vallejo as an imitator of Frazetta. I agree that some of his past work looked derivative; occasionally a knifesheath or other detail from a Frazetta painting will still pop up into one of Boris' sword and sorcery covers. But the bulk of his work now is, I think, distinctly his own. The differences are easy to see: for example, his figures aren't nearly as exaggerated as Frazetta's and they have somewhat of a more "posed" quality to them.

To answer the second part of your question: yes, there is definitely pressure from some publishers to get artists to act as "surrogate Frazettas" whenever a sword and sorcery book comes along. The black and white comix publishers were especially bad about this, though I don't know if they've outgrown that by now or not.

TM: I remember a cover you did for Marvel's black and white magazine "Kull and the Barbarians." What was the extent of your relationship with Marvel?

MW: My experience with Marvel was a drag. I think I did five covers in all for them, and none of them were enjoyable experiences. They kept bouncing back to me for often silly changes. The staff clique was annoying to deal with. Having to do a cover without any story as a guide--hence, doing a cover that didn't seem to have anything to do with the interior at all, etc.

My cover for the third "Kull and the Barbarians" is a good example. I got a call from Marvel: they wanted to do a cover depicting Kull, Solomon Kane and Red Sonja fighting side by side over a field of defeated foes. It sounded ridiculous to me--they don't have anything to do with each other! But I tried to do it. They sent it back to me three times and when they finally kept it that was the last I heard of it until it hit the stands. God--it was awful! They had someone paint over my foreground, background, and Red Sonja, then had the gall to put "cover by Michael Wheelan" in the credits! That really got me mad. I think they assumed it did; They never returned any of my calls after that.

TM: Finally, do you have any desire to do anything else besides paperback covers (such as comics or magazine illustration)?

MW: I enjoy doing paperbacks a lot when things are going well, but yes, I've got other things I'd like to get into. Magazine illustrations, album covers, posters--these are all possibilities I'll follow up sometime in the future. My ultimate goal is to break away from the publishers altogether and work for private collectors or exhibit in galleries. Not that I wouldn't still be illustrating! But having to only suit myself and not have the constriction of a 4x7 layout to deal with would be nice.

THE MICHAEL WHEELAN CHECKLIST (abridged)

Alan Burt Akers: Armada of Antares, The Tides of Kregen, Renegade of Kregan
Pierre Barbet: The Enchanted Planet
Lin Carter: The Enchantress of World's End, The Immortal of World's End, In the Green Star's Glow
C.J. Cherryh: Gate of Ivrel
Jo Clayton: Diadem From the Stars
J.T. Edson: Bunduki
Ron Goulart: When the Waker Sleeps
Tanith Lee: Volkhavaar
Fritz Lieber: Swords and Ice Magic
Michael Moorcock: The Land Leviathan, The Vanishing Tower, The Bane of the Black Sword
Gerald W. Page: Year's Best Horror Stories, Series IV and V
H. Beam Piper: Lord Kalvan of Otherwhen
Doris Piserchia: Earthchild
Brian M. Stableford: The Florians

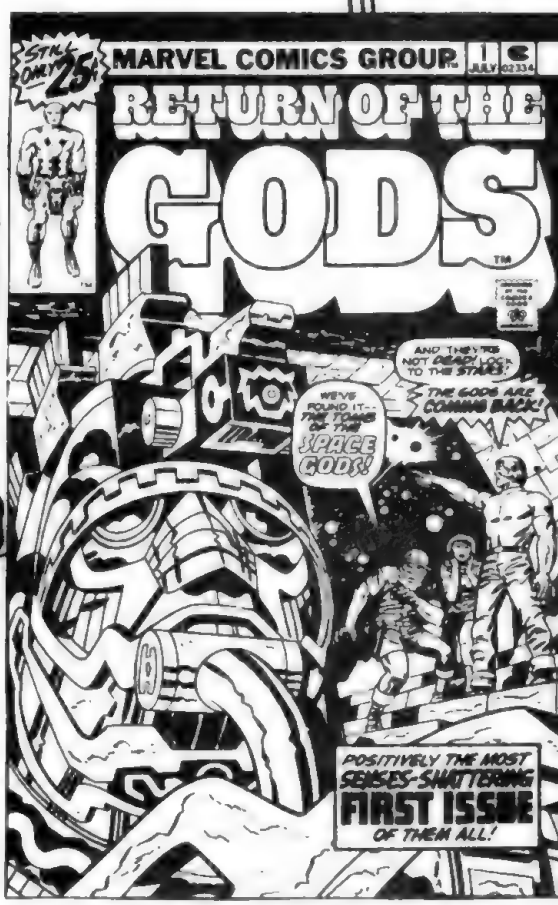
Too Late To Classify/

Andre Norton: Spell of the Witch World
Keith Laumer: Dinosaur Beach

THE DOOM OF THE

ETERNALS

DOUGLAS HERRING


STILL ONLY 25¢
MARVEL COMICS GROUP
1
JULY
RETURN OF THE
GODS
AND THEY'RE NOT READY YET TO THE STARS!
WE'VE FOUND IT--THE TOMB OF THE SPACE GODS!
THE GODS ARE COMING BACK!
POSITIVELY THE MOST SENSES-SHATTERING FIRST ISSUE OF THEM ALL!

HERRING 8'76

©1976 MARVEL COMICS

Jack Kirby's recently cancelled epic THE ETERNALS was the second in a series of "God epics" doomed for many reasons. In the earlier NEW GODS series there were four, later three, main titles carrying the various aspects of the Apokolips-New Genesis war and it still wasn't enough; too many characters and concepts came at the reader too soon. As a single title, the problem of too much too soon came down even worse on THE ETERNALS. With both series Jack was truly creating epics, and was concentrating on more than one character or one group. He also concentrated on how the events in each book effected the man on the street and various cultures and nations all over the world; and with the NEW GODS, on three worlds.

* * *

The concept of THE ETERNALS was a powerful one; the return of the Space Gods which not only spawned the human race, but had also created two related species, the Eternals and the Deviants. The Von Daniken concept hadn't really been tackled by Marvel since Stan Lee and Jack did FANTASTIC FOUR #64, July 1967; a comic that linked the Incas to extraterrestrials long before anyone ever heard of Von Daniken. The story potential of THE ETERNALS was fantastic, almost too much so, as the book was bogged down with Jack's age old problem of too much too soon. There was almost no attempt to establish a major character; the most frequent character, Ikaris, was completely absent from three issues and appeared on less than 3-5 pages on more than half the rest. I could live without the continuity, in fact I enjoyed the change of pace, but in an industry dependent on a 10-year-old being taken by a specific character, it was suicide.

I blame a lot of it on the 17-page comic. With 20 or more pages, Jack would have had a chance to develop more consistent story lines and separate sub-plots. Characterization needed a lot of work also. Let's face it; all we knew about Ikaris was that he had more of a temper because he came from the Polar Mountains. That's it. Very weak indeed, especially compared to the NEW GODS, where character motivation stole the show.

Part of the problem was establishing some kind of direction. If Jack had created, written, and drawn the first five issues on the assumption that the title would be THE ETERNALS, things might have been different. To me, the saga should have introduced Ikaris battling a Deviant flair-up in New York before the Space Gods arrived, with a lot of build-up to their coming. Then the next few issues should have concentrated on Ikaris and his fellow Eternals, and developed their personalities as they battle both Deviants and some established Marvel villains. Then around issue 10 have the coming of the Space Gods, with the last few preceeding issues dramatically building up to that point. Add a Thing team-up in TWO-IN-ONE, and some minor continuity as the Space Gods cometh, and folks like the FF and the Avengers couldn't ignore such fantastic events. These techniques sound gimmicky and "formula", but let's face facts. They are necessary when establishing a new character in this overcrowded business, as much as fandom hates it. Look how THOR started out, a hokey tale of a lame doctor turned into a Norse super-hero. It was only after the character was established that the strip took on its fantastic Asgardian aspects, and the origin was properly re-told.

The thing is, Jack finished the first five issues of THE ETERNALS under the belief that the title would be RETURN OF THE GODS. Unfortunately, a lot of pre-publicity caught the book in the CAPTAIN MARVEL-SHAZAM logo war between Marvel and DC comics. At the last minute, the long-awaited issue of FIRST ISSUE SPECIAL #13 with the NEW GODS was retitled RETURN OF THE NEW GODS, and

Jack's new book was screwed. It might not have made much difference, but the original logo really captured the "Chariot of the Gods" approach which could have had a greater impact on the more mature audience.

Fortunately, the Great Logo War has been over for over a year. Strangely enough, it brought us the SUPERMAN/SPIDERMAN team-up, but it also brought us HERCULES UNBOUND #1, rushed early so it beat out MARVEL PREMIERE #26 featuring Hercules by only one week. And who could forget the SHERLOCK HOLMES one-shot by DC designed to screw-up Marvel's rights to the character in their color line. Those were the days. Also, let it be known that FIRST ISSUE SPECIAL #13 featuring the return of the NEW GODS was the worst comic I have ever read. Every single concept and character in that epic series of Jack's was so grossly distorted and/or destroyed. As much respect as I have for Denny O'Neil and Gerry Conway, I find it difficult not to hold it against them. Whatever potential the recent revival has, FIS #13 is stifling it with so many out of place changes in the legend!

It really doesn't matter now, since THE ETERNALS has been cancelled. But who knows, we may someday see an Eternals revival. The concepts are good, they just need a change of direction and some support. Outside of the house ads, THE ETERNALS received none of the continuity support and cross-overs Marvel was once famous for. If THE ETERNALS are ever to return, it's up to fandom to clamor for it, and for Archie Goodwin, not Jack Kirby, to give it a second chance by entering some of its concepts into the main Marvel universe. Jack more-or-less implied that THE ETERNALS were outside the established Marvel universe, but uniting them is the only chance to save the series. I for one would love to see an Inhuman cross-over. The Kree meddling with human genes after the departure of the First Host, the Eternals thinking the Inhumans are Deviants and you never know,

it looks like Atilan and Olympia are right next door. Tons of potential--

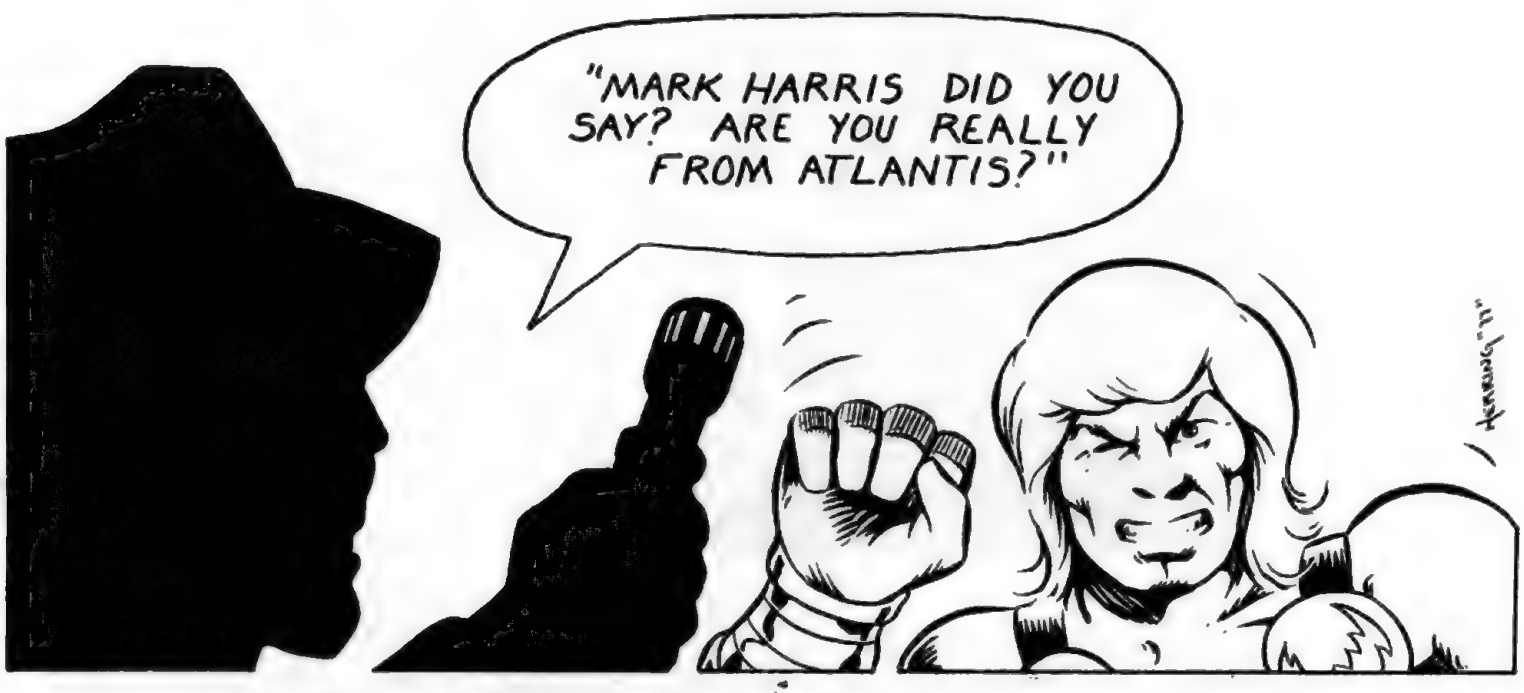
I'm not going to go into a detailed analysis of the characters and events in THE ETERNALS. Someone will no doubt write such a study along the lines of Bob Cosgrove's "Fourth World Retrospective" in COMIC CRUSADER #16. Not me. As you can see, I'm not really a writer, and I haven't even seen the last two issues yet. I'll miss THE ETERNALS, though, as bland as the main characters were, some of the supporting cast intrigued me. Karkas, the Reject, and the unnamed hero in #13, whom I suspect was either Hercules, Conan, or both. The potential was there in the first 17 issues when Jack introduced more fascinating storylines than were seen in the first 50 issues of the FANTASTIC FOUR. It just came too fast. Next time, I'd like to see him slow down and develop the characters fully before he sets those epic events completely into motion. Yes, there will be a next time, and I'm looking forward to it with great anticipation.

Nest time, I'd rather see Jack tackle the "Cosmic" theme rather than one of the gods. Personally, one past Kirby character sticks in my mind as showing enormous potential; Infinity-Man, the alter-ego of the Forever People. A power being from the edge of the universe where natural laws shift and bend. I was very moved by his escape from Mantis' Frigi-block (FOREVER PEOPLE #2, p. 19). Visually, it was a great effect, but the power it implied is what sticks in my mind. Beautiful.

By the time this is printed, Jack Kirby will have finished penciling the 100-page SILVER SURFER book and will be preparing a replacement for THE ETERNALS. I would like to see Jack hold off a bit, maybe tackle some of Marvel's main characters while waiting for the reaction to the SILVER SURFER book. I'd love to see Jack handle a revival of the series. My respect for John Buscema is endless, but he never really captured the "cosmic" feel of the Surfer like his creator did. If Jack does take over the series, Surfer purists will have to prepare for the worst. I suspect he will ignore the Shalla-Bal-Mephisto story-line, which was just Stan's old "hero with hang-ups" formula and definitely un-Kirby. I may be wrong, but I suspect the old storyline will play only a minor role in the book.

* * *

Jack Kirby is an entertainer. He's constantly trying to work up new ways to entertain us. It is a rough road as every untested concept has to pass



through the mine field of sale-ability. But despite his setbacks, he keeps on trying. While others fall back on formulas, he constantly braves the mines with new mind-blowing ideas. They don't always work, but even in failure there is knowledge to be gained and applied to the next project. Trial and error is not an easy system, but it works. Just keep your eyes on the King and I think you'll see what I mean.

BLATANT SELF-INDULGENCE

This was going to be the special "Surprise" issue of RADION until ENDEAVOR #12 arrived last week proclaiming itself to be a special "Surprise" issue. You'll get yours, Kurt. This, then, is now the special "Back-to-School" issue of RADION.

Leading off this issue is the first of three interviews, this one being with Tom Batiuk, the man behind "Funky Winkerbean." The interview was done back in early 1976, on cassette tape, but I don't think it has suffered much, if at all, from age. Mr. Batiuk was kind enough to send four proofs at a moment's notice, for which he has my eternal thanks.

The Mike Wheelan interview was done way back in August, 1977 (about 10 days ago as I write this). I find the interview fascinating, not only as a look at Michael Wheelan but also at paperback covers, of which I knew absolutely nothing. If you've never seen any of Michael Wheelan's covers, then the brief checklist is at your disposal.

"Doom Of The Eternals" marks Doug Herring's writing debut for RADION, with his critical look at Jack Kirby's (what else) THE ETERNALS. For the record, while I am not crazy about most of Kirby's work, I do like some of it. I didn't care too much for his CAPTAIN AMERICA, but then, I never got that excited over Steve Englehart's. "2001:" was just there. BLACK PANTHER was kind of silly, but a nice change of pace from the very serious McGregor. THE ETERNALS is probably my favorite of everything Kirby has done on his recent outing with Marvel. I agree with Doug in that I, too, would have liked to have seen THE ETERNALS told in two or possibly three books, ala The Fourth World series.

The editorial can easily be dismissed as blatant self-indulgence.

As the saying goes "last but not least," there is the Ron Goulart interview. Ron Goulart is probably my favorite sf author. At least, he's the only one I read with any regularity. I "discovered" sf back in May 1977 with a copy of QUEST OF THE GYPSY. My only prior exposure to it was through the comics. Needless to say, I am now addicted. Of the eight Goulart books I've gotten to read, my personal favorites would have to be WHEN THE WAKER SLEEPS, FLUX, and THE EMPEROR OF THE LAST DAYS. WHEN THE WAKER SLEEPS concerns Nate Kobean who is caught with the mad scientist's wife and given a drug that puts him to sleep for 50-year intervals. FLUX is Ben Jolson of the Chameleon Corps who changes his looks to suit the occasion. THE EMPEROR OF THE LAST DAYS concerns Dan Farleigh, Janis Trummond, and Bernard Maze, the computer and a cast of screwballs who uncover a plot to take over Earth. These brief plot summaries do

any of the stories justice. If you haven't read any Goulart books, you owe it to yourself.

There are two editions of Goulart books that didn't make the Checklist. These are NEMO and HARD-BOILED DICKS. By the way, if anybody can find me a copy of THE TREMENDOUS ADVENTURES OF BERNIE WINE, I'd be more than happy to take it off their hands.

Artwise, there is a tremendous (there's that word again) amount of talent. Doug Herring not only makes his writing debut with this issue, but also provided six illustrations. Doug has his eye on professional comics and I wish him the best of luck. Doug Hazlewood returns once again and his work is a welcome sight indeed. I've promised him that for next issue he won't have to ink any more sketches and we can see some more of his original work. The Gypsy collage on page 29 is also by Doug, although he thought it unethical to sign his name since he just re-inked some Alex Nino illoes of the character.

Sam de la Rosa sent a package from out west will all sorts of stuff, from himself as well as Ric Cruz and Bill Neville. If I understand the situation, Sam is running sort of a fanzine art supply shop. If I don't understand, he'll set me straight. I know nothing of Willie Blyberg except that he saw "Star Wars."

Everyone is encouraged to look at the UFO Checklist which begins on page 11 of this issue. Two new zines BATMANIA and ENDEAVOR are both worth your time and effort.

Again, I have exhausted my manilla envelope of contributions, so if anyone is interested in contributing, write me for details. I'll be glad to have you.

The next RADION will be out in early 1978 and will be the special "Double-Sized, Once in a Lifetime Annual."

Until then, goodnight and have a pleasant tomorrow.

WM BLACK '74

WHEN WORDS COLLIDE

Ron Goulart was born in 1933 and came East in the late 60s. He has been writing professionally for twenty-five years, during which he has written close to two hundred stories and articles that have appeared in magazines from Penthouse and Playboy to Ellery Queen and Fantasy and Science Fiction. He wrote his first novel, THE SWORD SWALLOWER, in 1968 and has since written seventy-five others, over half in his own name. If you haven't read any of his work, you've lead a sheltered life.

Tom Mason: How did your association with Byron Preiss come about?

Ron Goulart: Byron called me on the phone one day from California and asked me if I'd be interested in doing a novelet for his upcoming Weird Heroes thing. He claimed to be a fan of mine.

TM: Was Gypsy his idea or yours?

RG: The name and the character had been worked out by Byron. I was also, I think, sent Alex Nino's drawing of the character. All the other folks in the books, including the wiseass talking vulture are mine. Byron provided notes on plot directions.

TM: When you did the story, Quest of the Gypsy, for Weird Heroes 1 did you realize it would become part of a six book opus?

RG: Nope.

TM: Have all six Gypsy novels been written?

RG: They haven't, and they probably won't be. The second novel should be out in October. As to Gypsy's fate after that, I don't know. Last I heard Byron had decided to suspend the series. See him for technical details.

TM: In Weird Heroes 3, Byron compared Quest of the Gypsy to the old Patrick McGoohan television series "The Prisoner". Do you agree with such a comparison?

RG: I think I saw one episode of "The Prisoner". I thought it was a lot of pretentious crap. Therefore, I don't like to think that Gypsy is anything like the show.

TM: I can understand your writing the "Laverne and Shirley" books under the name "Con Steffanson". What other names do you use, and what books have you written under pseudonyms?

RG: The "Laverne and Shirley" books came out pretty funny. And paid more than Gypsy. Among the names I've used are:

Frank S. Shawn for 6 novels in THE PHANTOM series (Avon, 73-74)
Con Steffanson for 3 novels in the FLASH GORDON series (Avon 74)
Con Steffanson for 3 novels in the LAVERNE AND SHIRLEY series (from TV) (Warner 76)
Kenneth Robeson for 12 novels in the AVENGER series (Warner 74-75)
Howard Lee for KUNG FU #2: CHAINS (from the TV series) (Warner 73)
Howard Lee for KUNG FU #3: SUPERSTITION (TV) (Warner 73)
Joseph McRea for OBSESSION (from the movie) (Pocket Books 77)
Joseph Silva for ISLAND OF DR. MOREAU (from the movie) (Ace 77)

It's possible that Silva is related to my F&SF character Jose Silvera. They're both Portuguese. As am I.

(In series books using his own name, Ron Goulart has written 6 novels in the VAMPIRELLA series (Warner 76), CLEOPATRA JONES (from the movie--Warner 73), CLEOPATRA JONES AND THE CASINO OF GOLD (from the movie--Warner 75), and AN AMERICAN FAMILY (from the TV series--Warner 73)--TM).

TM: Why did it take you until 1968 to get into novels?

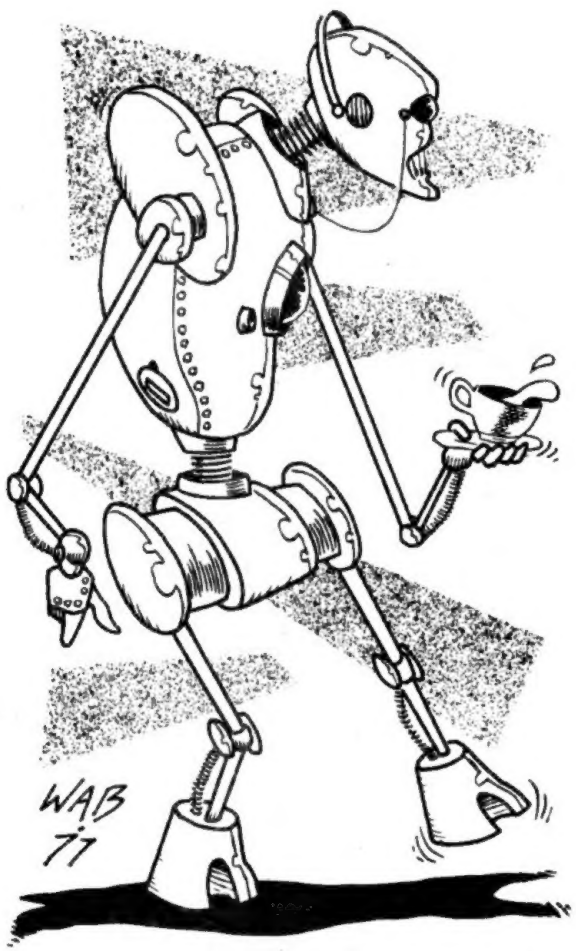
RG: I was hoping to be the only writer in America to make a living with nothing but short stories. Actually, I had tried to pitch a couple novels earlier. One of them, called NESBIT, ended up as a novella in a short-lived SF magazine named Gamma. Later, rewritten, it appeared in Wm F Nolan's anthology, The Future Is Now.

TM: Did you have a hard time selling your first novel, THE SWORD SWALLOWER?

RG: I did SWORD SWALLOWER first as a novelet and sold it to F&SF. I sent that novelet and an outline to my then agents. They sent it to Doubleday, who bought it.

TM: Are you planning any more non-fiction books like CHEAP THRILLS or THE ADVENTUROUS DECADE?

RG: I probably won't do any nostalgiz stuff in the immediated future. Unless somebody comes to me.



TM: Why were you hired to write the new Avenger novels for Warner when they ran out of the Kenneth Robeson ones? Were you required to follow any set pattern, or did they leave you to pretty much do as you pleased?

RG: The girl editing there had bought some of my SF (or one book anyway). She knew I was a pulp maven and when they decided to do more books, thought of me. Writing those dozen novels was one of the easiest jobs I've ever had. All I had to do was give them a title and paragraph to base cover copy on and I got a contract. To prepare for the series I read through about half of the earlier books. I was on my own as to plots, etc. Most of the stories grew out of the titles. I wish you could copyright titles, since the first Avenger I did was entitled THE MAN FROM ATLANTIS.

TM: How did the novelizations of Vampirella come about? And what control does Warren have over the stories?

RG: I am saving all my thoughts about Warren for the autobiography I intend to write late in life.

TM: Are you planning any more stories involving Max Kearny, the amateur ghost breaker, or John Easy, the private detective?

RG: I've made notes, now and then, for some new Kearny stories. But never seem to get around to doing one. I think it's been about eight years since I did one. When I first wrote them I was living in San Francisco and working for an ad agency, much like Max. The agency was on Kearny Street. John Easy came back to life for two stories in the short-lived Mystery Monthly earlier this year. The private eye category is not a hot one with publishers at the moment. But I'd like to see him have another go-round sometime.

TM: Do you have the whole Barnum system mapped out, as Vaughn Bode did with SUNPOT, or do you just create new planets for each novel?

RG: The Barnum System is really just Earth fragmented into a bunch of planets. I tend to use some of them over and over, but am not above adding a new one.

TM: Are you under contract with DAW, or is your relationship with them strictly free-lance?

RG: DAW could not afford to keep me in the style to which I am accustomed. Each time I do a book for Wollheim we sign a new contract, but I have no exclusive agreement. I do books for DAW because I'm allowed to be silly there. Some SF editors are more sober and serious.

TM: Which books of yours have sold the best?

RG: Strangely enough, the short story collections. That is in the SF field. My bestseller book to date, I must admit, was CLEOPATRA JONES. Based on the movie.

TM: Several authors (George MacDonald Fraser, William Coldman, and Joeseph Wambaugh) have branched out into movies. Would you eventually like to write for films? Or would you prefer having one of your books adapted to the screen as Roger Zelazny did with DAMNATION ALLEY?

RG: I'd like to write for any market which pays that kind of money.

TM: Do you have any say in who does the covers to your books?

RG: None. Even my editors usually have no say and are surprised as I am when they see the book. Once, I hear, an artist doing a cover for one of my books had a nervous breakdown in the middle of it and set it on fire. Which shows an artist's life is not an easy one.

TM: What new Ron Goulart books should we keep an eye out for?

RG: Most immediately I'll have a new one out from DAW, then another from Doubleday. Titles are not certain on these two. I'm signed to do a new one for Dell, then one for Doubleday, and one more for DAW. I'm also doing, under a penname, a possible series of books about a girl detective.

What I am most enthusiastic about at the moment is the comic strip NEA Syndicate asked me to do. I was approached about a year ago to try a space opera type thing. They liked my original notions and also thought highly of the artist I suggested. Who was Gil Kane, a neighbor of mine (in this part of the country anyone who lives within 10 miles is a neighbor). Anyway, after much hemming and hawing a strip got put together and the syndicated decided to offer it with considerable hoopla. At this writing two weeks of proofs, daily and Sunday, have gone out to several hundred papers and we are awaiting word on how many papers have picked it up. If enough do, we're in business and the strip will debut on October 3. You'll notice it's twice the size of the average daily.

(Ron was kind enough to enclose the proof sheet for the first three days of STAR HAWKS which I have run shamelessly below and on the next page. Commenting on the strip in the August 13 issue of EDITOR & PUBLISHER Goulart said of the two-tier format, "We can put a lot more action, story and art into the larger format. This in turn allows us to speed up the story time from the traditional 12 to 14 weeks to six weeks, creating the kind of crackling atmosphere a comic book reader likes." Papers subscribing to the strip include: Detroit News, Philadelphia News, Rocky Mountain News, Seattle Times, San Antonio Express and News, Charlotte News, Washington Star, Oakland Tribune, Albany Times Union, Dayton Daily News, and Houston Post. If your paper isn't listed above, you are advised to write them and ask them to run STAR HAWKS. Tell them to cancel NANCY or HENRY.)

TM: Would it be possible to supply a complete bibliography of your books?

RG: My new Doubleday book CRACKPOT has a fairly complete list of what I've done as myself. (Which is printed on the page following the STAR HAWKS samples--TM).

STAR HAWKS **by Gil Kane & Ron Goulart**

CIVILIZATIONS HAVE A TENDENCY TO RISE... AND FALL.
AS THE CENTURIES AHEAD OF US UNFOLDED, TECHNOLOGY BROUGHT BOTH GREAT ADVANCES...
... AND GREAT DECLINES.
KANE GOULART 10-3
THIS IS A STORY ABOUT THE DISTANT FUTURE, ABOUT A HIGH POINT IN THE CYCLE... WHEN EARTH HAS EXPLORED AND COLONIZED THE FAR PLANETS.
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